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SUBJECT: U/S TAUSCHER'S NATO VISIT SEPTEMBER 1

Classified By: AMB Ivo H. Daalder for reasons 1.4 (B)&(D).

¶1. (C) Summary: U/S Tauscher met with Acting Secretary General Claudio Bisogniero and WMD Center head Jacek Bylica September 1 to discuss arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation issues. She reassured both NATO officials that the U.S. would continue to consult extensively with Allies -- a process begun during the summer -- before it made major decisions on ballistic missile defense and the U.S. nuclear posture. End Summary.

NATO'S WMD CENTER

¶2. (C) Undersecretary for Arms Control and International Security Ellen Tauscher visited NATO September 1 as part of a brief visit to Brussels. She met first with Ambassador Jacek Bylica, head of NATO's Weapons of Mass Destruction Center. Bylica laid out his views of where various Allies stood with regard to arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. He said that newer Allies from the East had joined with the previous U.S. administration and the UK to press for non-proliferation, counter-proliferation and missile defense, but not arms control or disarmament. On the other hand, other Allies -- such as Germany, Italy, Norway, the Netherlands, and Belgium -- favored arms control and disarmament, but not missile defense or counter-proliferation. He said that before the 2008 U.S. elections a compromise was reached between the two camps to move forward on limited missile defense, while also "raising NATO's profile" on arms control and disarmament.

¶3. (C) He said that the Obama administration had changed the dynamic at NATO, however, and Allies of all stripes were enthused about the new possibilities. In particular, the President's Prague speech on nuclear weapons reductions and their eventual elimination in early April had restored U.S. leadership to arms control and disarmament as NATO issues.

¶4. (C) While generally agreeing with Bylica's analysis, U/S Tauscher cautioned him against mixing missile defense in with the other topics under discussion. She noted where the President was prepared to spend political capital on tough issues, including negotiating and signing a START follow-on treaty by the end of 2009; revitalizing the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) process; and making real progress on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT). All of these must-have issues would require the assistance of like-minded Allies at NATO. In addition, the President is keen to establish momentum ahead of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) review conference in 2010. The NPT is important because, lacking a non-proliferation treaty with teeth, the present situation of multiple proliferators will continue and likely worsen.

15. (C) Bylica noted in turn that, while the collapse of the 2005 NPT review conference was laid at the feet of Egypt and Iran, there was a widespread perception that the P-5 "official" nuclear weapons states (China, France, Russia, the UK and the U.S.) had not been serious about making progress. This was not something we could afford to repeat, as U/S Tauscher had said. He urged the U.S. to extend its leadership role from arms control and disarmament to include non-proliferation, and said we would find that a willing Alliance would support us. U/S Tauscher replied that, when the time was right and the U.S. had a message to deliver to Allies, we would come to NATO to do so. She noted that the Ballistic Missile Defense Review (BMDR) was very near completion, and the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) was due to finish by the end of 2009. In each case, she added, the U.S. would brief Allies on the results before they were made public.

DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL BISOGNIERO

16. (C) U/S Tauscher met later that afternoon with Deputy Secretary General Claudio Bisogniero, who commented on the "crucial" nature of the issues she covered and the signal President Obama had sent by calling her from Capitol Hill to take charge of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation at the State Department. Bisogniero noted that NATO would not proceed on the issue of missile defense in Europe until after the BMDR was completed, which gave the Alliance scant time to make further progress in time for the

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2010 Lisbon Summit.

17. (C) U/S Tauscher said the BMDR was still under interagency review, but that we would certainly consult with NATO Allies before making the results public. The focus would be on proven, cost-effective technologies which could be deployed in short order against the current threat of medium-range ballistic missiles from Iran. She said the U.S. hoped to partner with NATO in that endeavor, making use of the ALT-BMD architecture to plug in U.S. assets to contribute to effective missile defense in Europe. She added that the U.S. would of course hold bilateral discussions with Poland and the Czech Republic, but we have already committed to consulting with all 27 Allies before announcing our way ahead on missile defense.

18. (C) Bisogniero raised the issue of NATO-Russia relations, pointing out that the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) had made real progress in 2007-2008, which came crashing to a halt with the invasion of Georgia in August, 2008. Even though there had been some hopeful signs at the Corfu ministerial-level meeting this past summer, these had not yet filtered down to the Russian defense establishment, which still resisted meaningful contacts with NATO. Secretary General Rasmussen has made NATO-Russia relations a priority. U/S Tauscher said NATO needed to use the NRC, and particularly its sub-group on theater missile defense, to leverage the Russians to the negotiating table. Unfortunately, the Russians had set too many preconditions on missile defense in Europe for the U.S. to have much room to maneuver -- the politics of the situation was impinging on U.S. operational and planning flexibility.

19. (C) Bisogniero then turned to START follow-on negotiations, inquiring about their progress and noting the contrast in recent years from the 1980's, when it seemed that "a protocol a week" was being signed in NATO's conference rooms (INF, etc.) U/S Tauscher said both sides were led by seasoned negotiators, and that a draft treaty had just been tabled for discussion. It was important for Allies to remember, she added, that the quality of the U.S. nuclear deterrent was not strictly tied to the quantity of nuclear weapons we possessed. Bisogniero agreed, noting the nexus of

the U.S. Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) with NATO's search for an updated Strategic Concept, in which the role of nuclear weapons is likely to play an important part. U/S Tauscher replied that non-proliferation, counter-proliferation and nuclear security will all form part of our government's ongoing dialogue with NATO. With the NPR due to conclude in December, she believed that the Strategic Concept review will benefit from the outcome

of the NPR, and from ideas on extended deterrence which are currently under scussion. Finally, she said that progress on an FMCT would depend in part on our ability to convince both Allies and potential foes that the entry into force of the FMCT would not make deterrence any less robust.

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